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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of public library service given to those over age 64 in the seven Ohio counties which make up the Northeastern Ohio Library Association (NOLA). Based on a survey of the 34 public libraries in NOLA, this study of older adult services may be used as a basis for setting performance goals and objectives against which a library's success may be gauged. The investigation is based on the assumption that the needs and requirements of this particular segment of the population ought not be submerged by being grouped into adult services, that they have a specific claim on the resources of the public library. The following areas were analyzed: library staff attitudes; information and resources; service for all older adults; cultural, economic, and ethnic differences; liaisons; employment; planning participation; changing needs studies; budget commitments; and library comparisons. The survey questionnaire is included in the appendix. (Contains 27 references.) (JLB)

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OLDER ADULT SERVICES IN NORTHEASTERN OHIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Darlene A. Fegen

September, 1990

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

As of 1985, older Americans numbered 28,609,000, 12% of the total population.[1] Estimates are that by the year 2000, Americans 65 and over will number 13% or 34,921,000 people out of the total population.[2] A decade later, as the baby-boom generation begins to reach age 65, the number of older adults will rise dramatically.[3] Simply stated, not only is the percentage of the population comprised of older adults steadily increasing, so is the total number.

Closer to home, from 1980 to 1985, Ohio's population of older adults grew by 10.8% to 1,296,000.[4] It behooves public libraries to exhibit a greater drive in providing library service appropriate to older adults if for no other reason than that their voting power has an increasing impact on the public library's budget. In November, 1980, 74.6% (17,960,000) of Americans over age 64 was registered to vote and 65.1% (15,677,000) did vote in that election.[5] Too, the charge of ageism (i.e., stereotyping of older adults) may be leveled at a library that does not accept a socializing role for older adults while extending it to children and young adults. This older segment of the reading public has more leisure time available and is better educated than ever before. In 1965, the median number of school years completed for those aged over 64 was 8.5 years; by 1985 the median was 11.3 years, and by 2000 it is projected to be 12.4 years. The percent of high school graduates was 23.5% in 1965, 46.2% in 1985, and is expected to be 63.7% in 2000.[6]

Health is not necessarily a debilitating problem, and independence is commonly held onto as long as possible, but as people find it more difficult to be active, they often seek more passive activities that still enrich their lives. Research has shown an "increased income, especially among the new aged, which has been associated with lower levels of chronic, activity-limiting conditions, lower levels of self-assessed poor health, and fewer days, per capita, of hospital usage."[7] Activities at which a lot of time is spent were studied by Harris and Associates in 1974 and in 1981, with the result that reading was listed by 36% of those 65 plus in the earlier study and by 39% in the later one.[8]

Too, "the projected reductions in mortality will ensure the continued growth of the old old (aged 85 and older population). Its numbers will increase from their 1980 level of 2.2 million to nearly 7.1 million by the year 2020,"[9] or nearly 2.5% of the total population. The aging of the older population is associated with greater levels of chronic conditions and greater use of health care facilities. Even in the unlikely event of no change in declining mortality, projections show an expected increase of nursing home residents by 60% to 1.9 million by 2003. If declining mortality continues as it did from 1966 to 1976, the nursing home population will rise by more than 100% to 2.6 million.[10]

As the older adult becomes an increasing proportion of the American population, the question becomes ever more significant as to how public libraries are handling this challenge. In particular, meeting the needs of the able-bodied older adult has not been shown to be a priority in studies of public library service. Rather than

focus on the single special program that a library might offer, there must be a more generalized approach in an entire complex of services integrated into the library's overall planning process. The facts about present public library service to the older adult need to be gathered and analyzed so that the conditions at hand may be evaluated.

From a broader perspective, the quest to inventory the extent and variety of older adult services supports the shifting emphasis by library administrators away from control by means of internal measures to control by means of service to users. Accountability, or tracking how resources have been used and money spent for the benefit of the community, is a developing trend in library management. Demonstrating value for the tax dollars received by the public libraries is gaining in importance. Not only the typical performance standards of physical or material gains are being analyzed these days, but also ethical standards as in service for the disabled or for older adults. Heightened social awareness focuses attention on special populations and their needs and, in consequence, library services are expected to reach out to these groups. It is to be recognized that there are costs involved in paying attention to the ethical aspects of library service, as when ramps are installed or wider aisles are created.

B. OBJECTIVE

In 1987, the document "Guidelines for Library Service to Older Adults" (Appendix A) was adopted by the Reference and Adult Services Division of the American Library Association (ALA), having been prepared by the Library Services to an Aging Population Committee.

As listed in the guidelines, critical needs include the following: 1) a positive attitude toward the aging process and the older adult, 2) informational resources on aging and its challenges not only for the older adults themselves but also for family members, professionals in the field of aging, and other interested persons, 3) appropriate services for all older adults, not only those disabled or institutionalized, 4) services for older adults that reflect cultural, economic, and ethnic differences, 5) involvement of older adults as volunteers to reach their peers, 6) employment of older adults as professional or support staff, 7) participation of older adults in the planning of library services and programs, 8) relationships with other agencies and community groups that deal with older adults, 9) information and services for those retiring or changing careers, 10) accessibility of the library and transportation assistance, 11) periodic studies of changing needs of older adults, and 12) budget commitments to programs and services for older adults.[11]

This strong policy statement advocates greater library interaction with older adults at all levels of service. Are these guidelines being translated into actual library practices, or do most libraries consider service to the older adult as non-essential?

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of public library service to those over age 64 in the seven Ohio counties which make up the Northeastern Ohio Library Association (NOLA).

Based on a survey questionnaire, this study of older adult services may be used as a basis for setting performance goals and objectives against which a library's success may be gauged. At the

very least, the services listed will be useful as possibilities for libraries initiating or expanding such services. The investigation is based on the assumption that the needs and requirements of this particular segment of the population ought not be submerged by being grouped into adult services, that they have a specific claim on the resources of the public library. Still, it must be understood that "statistics on services to older adults never reflect total usage of public libraries by this group"[12] because those older adults without limitations assuredly use library services targeted for the general population.

C. DEFINITIONS

The older adult in this study is considered to be a person 65 years of age and older. It is understood that within this age span, there is a wide range of characteristics vis a vis health, education, and independence.

NOLA (Northeastern Ohio Library Association) is a regional library system composed of public and academic libraries, but this study concentrates solely on the public library membership.

Service for older adults is "any library offering that was developed specifically for the aging."[13]

For the purposes of this study, able-bodied is a term used to connote the "walk-in" library patron, one who is relatively independent and self-reliant as opposed to those who are severely disabled, homebound, or otherwise immobilized.

Elderhostel is an international program of college level non-credit courses for older adults.

A library collection is that "total accumulation of material of all kinds assembled by a library for its clientele."[14]

Outreach is "the process whereby a library service discovers the true nature of the community it serves and becomes fully involved in supporting community activities, whether or not centered on library premises."[15]

Information service is "a service provided by, or for, a library which draws attention to information possessed in the library or information department in anticipation of demand."[16]

Extension work is "activities which are undertaken with the object of reaching groups of people who might otherwise be unaware of the library."[17]

Ageism is "a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this for skin color and gender."[18]

A talking book is "a book for the blind recorded on tape."[19]

TTY is "a term that refers specifically to the original mechanical teletypewriters...with this device, people who are deaf may converse through typing and reading."[20]

D. LIMITATIONS

Limitations of time and money caused the selection of the thirty-four public libraries making up the NOLA Regional Library System for this study. Therefore, results are not necessarily generalizable to all public libraries. However, as shown in Table 1, a considerable span is covered in terms of population served, percentage of older adults, and budgeted money available in the counties encompassing the selected region. Mahoning County had a 1988 budget of $4,545,213 while Trumball County had $1,307,545 available. The 1984 senior citizen portion of Geauga and Portage

TABLE 1

BUDGETS AND COUNTY POPULATIONS OF NOLA LIBRARIES

County	1988 Budget	1980 Population	Percentages of 65+ (Projected) 1984	2000	2010
Ashtabula	$1,490,574	104,215	13.2	15.2	16.0
Columbiana	$1,646,159	113,572	12.7	14.6	15.4
Geauga	$2,137,950	74,474	8.3	11.5	13.7
Lake	$3,982,997	212,801	9.7	12.4	13.7
Mahoning	$4,545,213	289,487	13.6	15.9	15.7
Portage	$2,117,187	135,856	8.3	9.9	10.9
Trumbull	$1,307,545	241,863	11.9	14.7	16.0
		Average:	11.1	13.45	14.6

Sources: Ohio Data Users Center, 1988 Ohio County Profiles (Columbus, Oh.: Department of Development, 1988), 3 passim.

State Library of Ohio, Statistics of Ohio Libraries (Columbus, Oh.: State Library Board, 1989), 12 passim.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City/County Data Book (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1989), 394-5.

counties was 8.3% of the total population; but in Mahoning County seniors represented 13.6% at that time.

This study is not measuring the quality or adequacy of service, strictly the amount. Excluded are routine library services that are not age-defined as well as user preferences or reading interests, or other characteristics of the older population served, such as income or educational levels.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Benchmark data from the National Survey of Library Service to the Aging (1972) showed that: 1) library staff gave low priority to serving the older adult, 2) staffing was minimal, 3) barriers to improved service were lack of funds and lack of professional interest, 4) extension services accounted for 66% of services rendered, 5) less than 4% of the nation's older adults received any service, and 6) public libraries allocated about 1% of their budget for services to the older adult.[21]

Several state-wide surveys have been undertaken since then. These give the direction that public libraries are taking in addressing service to this growing age group. In Wisconsin, Margaret Monroe in 1975 found "42.5 percent were making specific budget allocations for this service, and 49.4 percent had a specific organizational structure for serving older adults."[22]

An Illinois survey is extensively compared to the national one in Genevieve Casey's monograph Library Services for the Aging (1984). She concluded that "public libraries today are more aware of the library/informational needs of the aging, and more competent and imaginative in meeting these needs"[23] despite the fact that the Illinois study shows a majority of Illinois libraries are not generally responsive to the interests of older adults.[24]

A comprehensive background on older adult services is given by Diane Thompson in "Serving Older Adults in North Carolina Public Libraries: A Survey" in North Carolina Libraries. As of 1985, North Carolina public libraries continue the trend noted in previous surveys of emphasizing outreach to the institutionalized and

homebound, more so in fact than in Illinois in 1981.[25] Although there were differences in the services surveyed, North Carolina public libraries offer more services to older adults than do Illinois libraries or the exemplary libraries of the national survey, particularly in the areas of special materials and information and referral.[26]

As reported in Ohio Libraries, Ohio public libraries were surveyed in 1987 to determine the kinds of services that were being offered to institutionalized people. Of interest to this project was the result that a majority of the respondents served nursing homes. Many included service to senior citizen apartments, which are not institutions. The report noted that "this response, perhaps, reflects an attitude of ageism, or stereotyping."[27]

The 1988 ALA Yearbook noted that as the population of older adults increases, so will its median line of education. This older population will include more people who have been, or will be, library users. AARP and Senior Olympics are organizations that show many older adults are active politically and physically and are largely self-sufficient.[28]

Elliott Kanner, who has been an advocate for older adults for almost twenty years, states:

> It has been established that reading is a significant pastime of older persons...whose level of educational attainment is perceptibly rising . . . . Older adults' learning activities are largely self-directed. In this light, librarians are definitely educators as well as providers, committed to the theme that learning never ends.[29]

Serving the Older Adult: a Guide to Library Programs and Information Services (1982) by Betty Turock provides an excellent overview of service to older adults, program planning and management, kinds of programs and information sources.[30] Of particular interest to this proposal is the section on collection development and life tasks of the older adult. The tasks identified are major change, adjustment, and opportunity. The topics under each task provide guidance in building collections to serve the older adult. As an example, widowowhood is a topic under the task of major change, and leisure activities is a topic under the task of opportunity. A bibliography is included to assist librarians in building a basic collection for older adults.

In 1984 Betty Turock undertook a two part update to the national survey. Phase one dealt with the exemplary libraries once again, as reported in "Public Library Service for Older Adults: Update 1984" in Library Quarterly. She found the results to be very similar to the 1971 survey. Lack of accessibility to the total library and lack of promotion of services were two of the problems identified in older adult service. She believes that the service to all philosophy is the public library's greatest strength, and at the same time its enduring weakness in serving older adults in that it "restrains public libraries from defining the older adult as one of their major markets and from designing programs specifically for them."[31]

Meanwhile, the psychological survival of older adults is a focus of gerontologists "since the failure to provide the elderly with meaningful social roles, their isolation from the general

population, the propagation of ageism, and segregation are recognized as causing extensive damage to their self-esteem.[32] Further, Turock states that the "accounts of innovation found in the professional literature are clearly models for emulation and imitation, not an accurate reflection of the state of professional practice."[33]

In phase two of Turock's national study a random sample of 325 public libraries in communities with populations over 25,000 was selected. In both phases, she discovered that one of the most significant barriers to the initiating of programs for older adults was that the librarians surveyed "persist in the view that the intellectual abilities of elders decline with aging and, therefore, informational and educational services are not the most appropriate to offer to an aging audience."[34] This finding shows a lack of sensitivity toward the aging by library personnel which was first targeted in Elliott Kanner's dissertation "The Impact of Gerontological Concepts on Principles of Librarianship" (1971), where he states: "The public librarian's view of aging, and his attitudes toward the aged have on the whole corresponded to those of the public at large ... problems of older citizens were ignored or sidetracked."[35]

Overall, Betty Turock has not found the major focus of library services for older adults to be much changed. The emphasis remains on reaching the impaired, homebound and institutionalized, despite the fact that only 5% of the older population is not independent, rather than on serving the self-reliant older adult.[36] She believes "a major effort must be directed at matching the strength

of traditional programs with programs for mobile, healthy elders"[37] because "in addition to continued minimal funding, the update demonstrated that responsibility for staffing, coordinating, planning and evaluating services to older adults had not yet been clearly and formally recognized in the organization of the public library."[38]

III. METHODOLOGY

Survey methodology was employed to investigate current conditions in public libraries related to the status of services for older adults, making this an exploratory study, concerned with gathering the facts for an analysis of the evidence collected.

A. INSTRUMENT

The research instrument is a twenty-seven point questionnaire (Appendix B) designed to measure how closely each library is following the "Guidelines for Library Service to Older Adults" prepared by ALA in 1987. Each question relates directly to one or more of the prescribed guidelines. Each guideline is numbered from 1 to 12, and each is sub-numbered, for example guideline 1 has sub-points 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5. The questions in the survey cover the broad guideline statements (1 through 12), and some of the survey questions cover sub-points from the guidelines. See Table 2, linking the guidelines to the questionnaire.

The survey questions were composed to give a comprehensive picture of the whole spectrum of responses to older adult needs, while being only as long as necessary to yield the information needed for the purposes of the study. Those questions incorporating checklists were written to cover the entire field so as to not bias the results in favor of the items listed, because provision for "other" responses has not appeared to improve the accuracy of results.

Each item on each question can be defended on the grounds that the answer is significant to the problem under consideration. Many of the questions did not receive a 100% response rate but were

TABLE 2

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE COORDINATED TO ALA GUIDELINES

Survey Question	Corresponding Guideline(s)
A	4, 4.4, 4.5
B	4, 7.3, 9, 9.2
C	2, 2.1, 2.2
D	2.3, 4.2
E	1, 2.1
F	3
G	2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 8.4
H	9, 9.1, 9.3
I	2.7
J	1.5, 4.1, 12
K	11, 11.1
L	7
M	4.3, 10, 10.1, 10.4, 10.5
N	1, 1.2, 1.3
O	1, 1.2, 1.3
P	1, 1.2, 1.3
Q	1, 1.2, 1.3
R	4.1, 5, 6, 12.1
S	10.6, 12
T	4.6, 8, 8.1, 8.2, 8.4, 9.2
U	1.5, 4.1, 10.5, 12
V	1, 1.4, 8.4
W	1, 1.4
X	5, 6, 6.1
Y	5, 6.2
Z	1

skipped over by the respondent. It is assumed that the response then is a negative (i.e. the library does not have the materials or does not offer the services and programs delineated), and therefore all counts and calculations are based on the baseline of thirty libraries equaling 100%.

The thirty-four public libraries in NOLA as listed in Ohio Library Directory have been chosen as the population for this study. The survey was sent to the current respective library directors indicated in the American Library Directory. These libraries serve a population of 1,172,268 according to Statistics of Ohio Libraries.[39] In 1984 the percentage of the population over 65 years of age was 11.1% for these counties, while the national percentage for 1985 was 11.9% according to the 1989 Statistical Abstract of the United States.[40] The percentage for this age group in the seven counties is projected to rise to 13.45% by 2000, and to 14.6% by 2010, according to Ohio County Profiles .[41]

B. DATA COLLECTION

The four-page questionnire was sent with a cover letter (Appendix C) and a stamped envelope for return to the thirty-four libraries representing the public library membership of NOLA. Twenty-nine completed questionnaires were returned, at which time a second, identical packet was sent to the five non-responding libraries, with the result that one more return was garnered, for a total of thirty surveys upon which the study is based. That 88% of the libraries actively cooperated reflects an interest in the field of older adult services that is encouraging and is supported by several of the comments appended to the questionnaires. The

acknowledged importance of service to this patron group by public libraries is existent regardless of where a library may be along a continuum of services actually provided.

In considering the four libraries not returning a questionnaire, a non-response bias was not uncovered. Based on information from Statistics of Ohio Libraries, no common ground was found in terms of circulation, yearly budget, book volumes, or staff size. See Table 3 for demographics on the libraries in NOLA.

The value of the data collected with a questionnaire depends on the competency of the respondents. If sent to the person in the best position to make a reliable report, the data will reflect this; also a higher educational level and facility in writing would tend to increase the percentage of returns. Thus, it was appropriate to address the packets to the libraries' directors, although the cover letter stated it was acceptable to have another staff member complete the questionnaire if he or she was qualified to do so.

TABLE 3

DEMOGRAPHICS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN NOLA

Town	1988 Income	Book Holdings	Population Served	Circu-lation	FTE Staff
Andover	$146,645	36,363	2,424*	83,433	5.2
Ashtabula County	$725,984	120,976	63,000	241,931	22.7
Ashtabula Harbor	$194,428	41,196	47,475	70,217	6.9
Bristolville	$235,322	28,500	3,151*	61,000	6.3
Burton	$378,239	63,158	7,100	147,394	11.3
Columbiana	$230,736	39,676	9,546	147,180	6.8
Conneaut	$241,527	64,001	21,000	171,372	9.7
East Liverpool	$432,959	141,687	50,000	116,629	9.6
East Palestine	$152,210	35,967	5,700	55,274	4.1
Fairport Harbor	$165,734	41,942	3,351	50,670	5.3
Garrettsville	$1,056,657	109,743	81,422	390,637	43.4
Girard	$434,740	74,997	35,000	98,616	11.3
Hubbard	$415,929	42,504	16,520	162,923	13.7
Jefferson	$191,741	31,590	10,000	119,030	5.0
Kingsville	$192,352	27,822	2,162*	120,390	4.2
Kirtland	$276,267	55,324	7,216	239,135	8.1
Lisbon	$303,786	68,959	58,000	173,858	8.6
Madison	$332,348	66,475	18,200	209,559	10.3
Mentor	$814,439	122,543	52,422	479,044	28.4
Newton Falls	$468,749	29,267	10,000	95,428	9.0
Niles	$519,977	58,337	25,026	117,741	13.1

TABLE 3 - Continued

DEMOGRAPHICS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN NOLA

Town	1988 Income	Book Holdings	Population Served	Circu-lation	FTE Staff
Orwell	$72,863	15,092	2,500	28,190	1.9
Painesville	$648,245	79,172	42,000	428,111	19.5
Perry	$174,948	35,747	7,262	99,811	7.0
Ravenna	$491,557	69,361	11,610*	165,106	18.5
Rock Creek	$78,520	15,077	2,256	33,489	2.4
Salem	$430,910	58,191	18,800	216,691	11.3
Warren	$1,603,844	162,705	241,646	472,158	48.8
Wellsville	$195,684	35,915	14,299	49,034	5.5
Youngstown	$5,733,645	640,319	276,600	1,509,121	145.5

Libraries Not Participating in Survey

Town	1988 Income	Book Holdings	Population Served	Circu-lation	FTE Staff
Chardon	$2,831,894	228,010	74,474	829,705	60.0
Kent	$696,843	89,261	26,164	270,890	18.5
Kinsman	$221,615	36,687	8,057	86,629	5.1
Leetonia	$157,747	27,527	5,000	60,917	4.2

*These populations are for the township involved, 36 square miles.

Sources: State Library of Ohio, Statistics of Ohio Libraries (Columbus, Oh.: State Library Board, 1989), 12-13.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City/County Data Book (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1989), 775.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

A. POSITIVE ATTITUDE

The critical needs listed in the ALA guidelines for older adult service begin with the need for a positive attitude toward older adults, not only in person to person interactions but on a broader, more philosophical level. A solid foundation for worthwhile service can only be built on an understanding of what aging encompasses in terms of social, cultural, psychological and physiological changes. This understanding can grow as library staff are educated on the aging process, as they enhance their skills in working with older adults, and as they seek to communicate effectively with them. Additional benefits to be garnered include an increasing interest in and respect for older adults combined with a dismantling of harmful stereotypical attitudes toward aging. One library collects no fines for late returns by those with a senior library card, denoting in part a consideration for the difficulty in timely transportation often experienced by elders.

Several questions were designed to elicit information on actions promoting a favorable attitude toward older adults. Enhancing skills in working with older adults is encouraged by 13% (4) of the libraries by providing staff workshops or seminars. Also, 30% (9) of staff members have participated in non-library-sponsored continuing education to add to these skills. None of the libraries provide workshops or seminars to educate staff on life stage development and the aging process, but 3% (1) answered positively as to staff members participating in such

non-library-sponsored education, while 23% (7) are not sure whether this has occurred. Thus, it seems that the more concrete issue of skill development takes priority over the advancement of understanding the later portion of the life cycle, not only by the libraries in terms of the seminars offered, but also in the voluntary continuing education choices made by the staff.

This conclusion stands in some contrast to the responses to the Likert scale questions on the significance of acquiring more knowledge about older people. When asked for agreement or the lack thereof to the statement that it is important to know about the aging process to better serve older adults, 20% (6) of the libraries strongly agreed, 57% (17) agreed, 13% (4) were not sure, and 7% (2) disagreed. The statement that it is important for librarians to know about the concept of ageism (stereotyping and discrimination against the aging) to better serve older adults found 20% (6) in strong agreement, 63% (19) in agreement, 10% (3) not sure, and but 3% (1) in disagreement. Overall then, agreement with the first statement was 77%, and 83% with the second. So at a theoretical level the importance of comprehending the feelings and needs of older adults is acceded to in large measure but has yet to be translated into corresponding action.

No study of public librarian perceptions of older adults has been undertaken in the over twenty years since Kenneth Ferstl's dissertation titled "Public Libraries and Service to the Aging: A Study of Attitudes." This survey points out a continued lack of commitment to actively working on understanding the dynamics of aging. The belief seems to be that while continuing education on

the aging process is well and good, libraries need not promote such education.

Beyond the lack of promotion of understanding the aging, there is also the lack of a cohesive vision regarding the barriers to older adult services. When asked to rank possible barriers from a given list (lack of funds, lack of staff, lack of staff interest, lack of senior interest, lack of transportation by seniors, and other), an extremely wide divergence of viewpoints was expressed. As shown in Table 4, each possible barrier, excepting lack of staff interest, was given a ranking of most significant by more than one library. Even the "other" category received two top rankings, the two explanations being lack of planning time and physical plant limitation, this last of which in fact was listed by several libraries with varying degrees of significance. While five libraries did not answer this question, 23% (7) marked as the most significant obstacle a lack of interest by seniors, balanced by seven who saw it as fifth in significance. Six libraries (20%) selected lack of funds as the most significant obstacle, and four (13%) viewed lack of funds as least significant. Three libraries (10%) used the same significance factor twice or more often, one library (3%) giving a number one ranking to three items. One library simply checked off one barrier: lack of senior interest.

B. INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Guideline 2 from the ALA covers a wide range of suggested activities highlighting information and resource development on the aging process. Initially, the needs of the particular

TABLE 4

BARRIERS TO OLDER ADULT SERVICES

OBSTACLE	NO. OF LIBRARIES RANKING (Most Significant to Least)						TOTAL	MEAN
Lack of...								
Senior Interest	7	3	5	2	7	1	25	3.92
Funds	6	4	5	2	3	4	24	3.83
Staff	5	9	3	6	1	-	24	4.45
Transportation	5	4	2	5	4	4	24	3.54
Staff Interest	-	4	5	5	5	5	24	2.91
Other	2	-	2	-	-	-	24	.83

library's older clientele ought to be assessed in order to focus efforts toward appropriate priorities. Then, the selection of current and fitting subject materials in varying formats is critical to meeting the information needs of people throughout their lifespan. Useful resources are available throughout a community; information on various organizations and agencies and their offerings can be pulled together and organized for the benefit of the older population. Finally, publicity plays a significant role in informing those who are potential patrons of these resources, not just the older adults themselves but also professional service providers, family members, and others interested in the implications of aging.

On a positive note, 87% (26) of the libraries have in their collections materials to assist older adults as well as family members, social workers, nurses, and other possible advocates of the aging, in understanding the aging process. Although four libraries answered this question (E) negatively, their positive responses to question C on collection development show some inconsistency: all four had added books or materials on loss of a spouse and other of the older-adult related issues listed as possibilities. In fact, one library had added materials in all fifteen of the categories, and another had added in thirteen of the categories. Collection development on these issues of personal interaction and changing family relationships, even positive fictional approaches to aging, certainly leads to greater understanding of the implications of aging. However, if this is not recognized, the collection may exist to meet people's needs without their being effectively guided to the resources.

As a whole, collection development that supports the various information needs of older adults is a real strength of the libraries surveyed. Table 5 details the libraries' coverage of older adult issues. Since the question specified that the materials relate to older adult needs, as in traveling, finances, and sexuality, these are not simply general adult selections. With fifteen categories of interest listed, the question asked for additions to the collection in the past five years. Of libraries responding, 37% (11) had added books or other materials in all categories. All but one library, or 97%, have purchased items dealing with health issues, and the same is true of materials

TABLE 5

OLDER ADULT ISSUES IN COLLECTIONS

Rank Order of Subjects Held in Libraries:

Subject/Issue	N=30	Percentage
Health Issues	29	97%
Loss of spouse	29	97%
Nutrition	26	87%
Understanding Aging	25	83
Travel	25	83%
Finances	24	80%
Retirement/Job change	24	80%
Tax Information	24	80%
Changing Family	23	77%
Elderhostel	23	77%
Consumer Issues	22	73%
Leisure Time	22	73%
Housing	21	70%
Sexuality	21	70%
Positive Fiction on Aging	20	67%
Lifelong Learning	16	53%

dealing with loss of a spouse. The least often marked category was lifelong learning, and at that 53% (16) of the libraries responded positively to updating in this category.

Another very encouraging aspect of older adult service lies in the diversity of formats available, as depicted in Table 6. Large print books are obtainable at 100% of the libraries, and books on tape are obtainable at all but one library, which noted that it has them on order. Videotapes too are carried by all but one library (97%). Over half the libraries (53%) provide large print serials, and almost half (47%) provide talking books, while Braille items are available at nine (30%) of the libraries. Six libraries (20%) offer six of the formats, the only listed possibility not available anywhere being large print materials in a foreign language. Thus the various capabilities and interests of the older adult clientele are being taken into consideration with a wide range of formats.

Other special resources, displayed in Table 6, include magnifying glasses, offered by 43% (13) of the libraries. Only 10% (3) provide TTY's for the hearing impaired or stereo systems for personal listening. Bookholders are at two libraries (7%), and a computerized catalog accessible by a home computer is at one (3%).

Information and referral services listed in Table 6 include maintaining files on community agencies that offer gerontological services and materials, on-going in 53% (16) of the libraries. Community activity information on topics such as upcoming speakers and events is not so thoroughly collected, with 30% (9) offering such information. Funding agencies for older adult programming,

TABLE 6

SERVICES OFFERED FOR OLDER ADULTS

Service	N=30	Percentage
Formats:		
Large print books	30	100%
Books on tape	29	97%
Video tapes	29	97%
Large print serials	16	53%
Talking books	14	47%
Braille materials	9	30%
Large print in foreign language	0	0%
Accessibility Features:		
Accessible to disabled	22	73%
Magnifying glasses	13	43%
Rooms with high intensity lighting	10	30%
Large print signage	8	27%
TTY for hearing impaired	3	10%
Stereo for personal use	3	10%
Bookholders	2	7%
Home computer access	1	3%
Translator/interpreter	1	3%
Transportation	0	0%

TABLE 6-Continued

SERVICES OFFERED FOR OLDER ADULTS

Service	N=30	Percentage
Information and Referral:		
Community agencies	16	53%
Community activities	9	30%
Funding agencies	6	20%
Job listings	4	13%
Career/employment advisory	1	3%
Publicity:		
Newspaper	18	60%
Reading lists/exhibits	13	43%
Local presentations	10	30%
Radio	8	27%
Direct mail	4	13%
Television	3	10%
Other	2	7%

materials, and services receive the least attention; 20% (6) of the libraries track this. One library stated that "First Call for Help" fulfills the community's requirements for such information in lieu of its doing so, while another stated that the available materials are simply what they have for all patrons. With fourteen libraries not active whatsoever in information and referral, one must question if existing community resources are used to full advantage by those they are designed to reach. The importance of information and referral services in "helping older adults through a maze of organizations/agencies in order to effectively put the elderly in contact with resources the library does not itself provide"[42] is not reflected in what the queried libraries are doing in this arena, yet the public library generally is the logical, convenient community location to accumulate and disseminate such information.

The publicizing of library resources is possible in a wide variety of ways; methods include reading lists and exhibits in-house or out, attending meetings and giving presentations, mail-outs directed toward not only interested individuals but also appropriate agencies, clubs and chairpeople, and newspaper, radio, and television advertising. By expanding beyond the library itself for dissemination of information, the target audience would be expected to increase.

As shown in Table 6, of the responses tabulated, newspaper publicity is used by 60% (18) of the libraries, followed by reading lists and exhibits at 43% (13). Local group presentations at 30% (9) and radio publicity at 27% (8) are employed more

frequently than direct mail at 13% (4) or television at 10% (3). Two libraries noted production of a newsletter, the one being titled "Homebound Handout." Two libraries take advantage of five out of six options in promoting their resources; three libraries employ four of the possibilities. Of these five most active libraries, four do not use direct mail in their publicizing endeavors. Reaching out to inform potential older adult patrons of whatever is available shows a high level of interest even though constraints such as inadequate funding or staffing may hold back programming efforts.

C. SERVICE FOR ALL OLDER ADULTS

Service to all older adults, not just those able-bodied ones that are able to come to the library, is a worthwhile goal according to guideline 4 from the ALA. Although only 5% of the older population is homebound or institutionalized, it is not to be neglected; personalized service geared to special needs can be worked out in cooperation with institutions. An alternative at times may be library on-site service with transportation provided by the library, especially for those geographically isolated. Special materials and equipment are components of this service to all, as well as staff trained in gerontological concepts.

In attempting to give appropriate library service, outreach is being employed by 90% (27) of the libraries, depicted in Table 7. Home delivery service is operating in 70% (21) of them, deposit collections in 53% (16). Next in frequency is the category of other, 20% (6); the appended explanations include campground, nursing home, and low-income housing visits,

TABLE 7

OUTREACH AND COOPERATIVE EFFORTS FOR OLDER ADULTS

Service	N=30	Percentage
Outreach:		
Home delivery	21	70%
Deposit collection	16	53%
Other (6 different)	6	20%
Bookmobile service	5	17%
Off-site programming	3	10%
Books-by-mail	2	7%
Transportation	0	0%
Interagency Cooperative Efforts:		
Local government agencies	3	10%
Retirement groups	3	10%
Local historical society	2	7%
Nursing homes	2	7%
Retirement apartments	2	7%
Educational institutions	1	3%
Local non-profit groups	1	3%
Political/civic groups	1	3%
Professional service providers	1	3%
Religious/church groups	1	3%
Senior centers	1	3%
Social groups	1	3%
Volunteer groups	1	3%
Elderhostel	0	0%
Hospitals	0	0%
Local businesses	0	0%

individual reader service, and taking books to senior citizens' meetings, all reflecting a wide range of innovative applications to the goal of taking the library to the people. One library states it is considering storytelling programs for area nursing homes.

Bookmobiles are run by five libraries (17%), off-site programming by three (10%), and books by mail by two (7%). None of the libraries provide transportation. Guideline 4.7 recommends doing so, and as discussed above, the ranking of barriers responses indicates five libraries giving lack of transportation a top ranking, with four more giving it a second ranking, for a 30% high priority rating: an acknowledged need that is not being addressed. In fact, when Stella Kern surveyed 5,000 older adults randomly selected in the Orange County Library population, she found non-use primarily caused by lack of transportation.[43]

Overall, three libraries offer four of the various outreach options, all three employing home delivery, off-site programming, and deposit collections. Another four libraries employ three outreach methods each; three (10%) libraries have no outreach whatsoever.

Working directly with older adults as a primary assignment for a staff member occurs in 13% (4) of the libraries, but is oriented toward the narrow definition of "home-bound" clientele, evidenced by the fact that three of the libraries listed the position's title with the word "home" as integral. The fourth library stated that older adult services are part of the primary responsibility of the adult librarian position. Considering that

the FTE staff for the thirty libraries totals 540.7 persons, this statistic of .7% of staff assigned is not even close to the 1.6% of Turock's 1984 update study or the 1.3% of the twenty-year-old national study which recommends that "to elevate library service to the elderly to a higher, more visible priority, older adults as a group should be considered a discrete program entity with a coordinator appointed to ensure that their special needs were identified."[44]

For some background, one question asked if any programs or services for older adults had been discontinued in the past five years. Only one library (3%) marked yes, with the reason given as lack of older adult interest. It seems clear that what has been implemented is appreciated by older adults and fills a need and that the programs and services should continue. This contrasts with what Turock found between the time of the national study and her update some ten years later, that 12% of older adult services had been terminated.[45] Are libraries improving planning processes so that successful outcomes are more likely?

The physical features of each library that add to the quality of older adults' visits were addressed in question J. Extra wide doors, handbars, ramps and elevators, wheelchair accessible restrooms and tables or other such design features that increase the accessibility of a library are in place in 73% (22) of the libraries. Meeting rooms with high intensity lighting are in 33% (10) of the libraries, and large print signage is evidenced in 27% (8). None had audio loops to give amplified sound through headsets in their meeting rooms nor a television closed-caption decoder.

Table 7 details involvement in cooperative planning with community agencies, organizations, and groups connected with older adults, ongoing in only 20% (6) of the libraries, in marked contrast to Turock's findings that approximately two-thirds of all public libraries do cooperate with other organizations.[46]

The most active library has eight group contacts, the other five active libraries range from six contacts to four to just one group contact for three of the libraries. Retirement groups and local government agencies are the targets of three libraries, while local historical societies, religious/church groups, and nursing homes are each listed by two libraries, followed by one contact with educational institutions, retirement apartments, employment agencies, political/civic groups, local non-profit groups, professional service provider groups, senior centers, volunteer groups, and social groups. None of the libraries are cooperatively involved with employment agencies, hospitals, local businesses, or Elderhostel.

Regularly scheduled programs that older adults participate in are proffered by just under half the libraries - 14 or 47%. A range of nineteen relevant topics was listed; of these, one library provides programming on 14, and two libraries on 7. Two libraries have GED/literacy programs as their single offering, and two have financial/income tax assistance as their single offering.

The most popular subject is financial with 33% (10) favoring it, then literacy and book reviews/discussions with 23% (7) each. Crafts and hobbies come in at 20% (6). As shown in Table 8, other possibilities garnering one to three responses, in descending

TABLE 8

PROGRAMMING OFFERED FOR OLDER ADULTS

	N=30	Percentage
Financial/income taxes	10	33%
Book reviews and discussions	7	23%
GED/literacy	7	23%
Crafts, hobbies	6	20%
Nutrition	4	13%
Health	3	10%
Travelogues	3	10%
Consumer education	2	7%
Current events	2	7%
Library skills	2	7%
Aging process	1	3%
Music	1	3%
Oral history	1	3%
Poetry/ creative writing	1	3%
Work/retirement planning	1	3%
Drama	0	0%
Games	0	0%
Intergenerational programming	0	0%
Other	9	30%

order of frequency, are health issues, nutrition, travelogues, consumer education, current events, library skills, the aging process, music, oral history, poetry or creative writing, and work or retirement planning. No programming is evidenced in drama, games, or intergenerational activities.

D. CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

The heterogeneity of older adults is especially addressed in ALA guideline 3 in the recognition of their economic, cultural, and ethnic differences. As Kanner states, "their material and sociopsychological needs vary and are conditioned by each individual's socioeconomic position."[47] Becoming knowledgeable about these differences within a community is a prerequisite to applying the knowledge toward material selection, planning of programs and services, and developing interagency cooperation. Supporting literacy efforts for the older population is another aspect of acknowledging differences among people.

Ten libraries (33%) schedule financial or income tax assistance programs, and seven (23%) offer GED or literacy programs, but only one (3%) has oral history programs. According to Turock, oral history is "an exercise leading to the integration of life experience, perceived by gerontologists as an important task of the later years."[48]

When queried on translators or interpreters, the libraries all responded negatively save one with a bilingual staff member. No library has large print items in a foreign language. Table 9 gives selected characteristics of the counties covered by the study, listing estimates by the Bureau of Census of those who

TABLE 9
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATIONS IN NOLA COUNTIES

Disability Status of Noninstitutional Persons Ages 65+:

	White	Black	Spanish	Asian, etc
Ashtabula	11,080	209	45	0
Columbiana	12,710	165	22	0
Geauga	5,240	79	0	0
Lake	15,820	202	19	61
Mahoning	30,694	3,517	266	44
Portage	8,956	215	37	41
Trumbull	22,664	1,073	82	62
TOTAL:	107,164	5,460	471	208

Public Transportation Disabilities of Persons Ages 65+:

	White	Black	Spanish	Asian, etc
Ashtabula	1,137	23	0	0
Columbiana	2,658	5	0	0
Geauga	715	26	0	0
Lake	2,132	34	5	5
Mahoning	4,278	774	43	0
Portage	1,367	18	7	7
Trumbull	2,652	141	7	5
TOTAL:	14,939	998	85	17

Speak a Language Other Than English at Home, Ages 5+:

Ashtabula	5,055
Columbiana	2,542
Geauga	7,121
Lake	12,758
Mahoning	25,313
Portage	5,362
Trumbull	14,623
TOTAL:	72,774

Speak English Not Well or Not At All, Ages 26+:

Ashtabula	399
Columbiana	147
Geauga	223
Lake	911
Mahoning	2,336
Portage	273
Trumbull	1,078
TOTAL:	5,367

Note: These numbers are estimates are based on a sample.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population, vol. 1 Characteristics of the Population: Part 37: Ohio (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983), 37-749, 37-651.

speak English not well or not at all. If 10% of that figure is taken as likely to be older, the result is 537 people. In other words, there are those not being served because of a language barrier. From the total of those who speak a language other than English at home, 10% is equivalent to 7,277 older adults who might desire non-English items.

E. LIAISONS

When there are older adults actively helping the library in whatever role, this encourages other older adults coming in, making them feel more welcome and, too, they may realize they have time and talents to offer. Beyond peer relationships, intergenerational programming can reach out to youngsters to broaden the horizons and enrich the lives of both age groups.

All but five libraries (83%) utilize older adults in volunteer capacities; all sorts of activities are accomplished by the volunteers. Aiding the circulation desk or doing clerical tasks are listed by 30% (11) of the libraries. Other volunteer efforts include program hostessing or similar assistance at various activities such as book sales (8 libraries), shelving and shelf reading (5), story hour help (3), book washing (2), aid with genealogy (2), tutoring (1), vertical file compilation (1), and inventory (1). Some libraries list several volunteer duties while others give no detail at all. It is evident that the potential of older adults is recognized and encouraged in the realm of volunteer activities, but possibly these activities could be more focused toward service improvements for older adults.

Of the ten libraries (33%) ranking lack of funds as most or

very significant as a barrier, two of these do not take advantage of the benefits of volunteering at all.

F. EMPLOYMENT

Guideline 9 states that providing information to older adults on career alternatives is a responsibility of the public library, but only one library offers regular programming on work and retirement planning. That same library has a career and employment advisory service that includes job listings. Three other libraries also provide a job listing service, so that altogether just 13% (4) of the libraries offer a hand to those preparing to alter their work life in various ways, in spite of the "demographic and economic pressures compelling a re-thinking of early and full retirement as a sole option for the older American."[49]

Although Turock found "no evidence that those 65 years or older are hired by libraries,"[50] eleven (33%) of the libraries surveyed have hired someone older than 64 in the last five years, and one library responded "no-but close" while another one was not sure. In three of these cases the position is custodial, in four cases it is clerical; the other situations filled are home services coordinator, delivery person, and professional librarian with an MLS degree.

G. PLANNING PARTICIPATION

When questioned whether older adults participate in planning their own services (e.g. serve on advisory committees), only 3 (10%) answered positively. This reflects a lack of appreciation for the potential contributions they can make, not only to the

design of their own services and programs but also to the entire community. Without the clearly defined objectives of the seniors themselves worked out in detailed planning, what level of service can be effected?

H. CHANGING NEEDS STUDIES

As Monroe discovered in her 1975 Wisconsin study, "the orientation of most public libraries...prohibited a realistic estimate of the numbers of elderly served."[51] One library tracks the number of patrons over age 64, giving the count as 1158 out of 63,000 in population served according to the American Library Directory.

When asked if surveys are done of older adults in the community for their preferences in programming or services, 23% (7) do so. One library is not sure how often, one gave the frequency as monthly, one said yearly, one every two years (this for Large Print selections), and one every three to four years. One stated a survey is in progress, and the last does the survey "on an individual basis."

These continued re-evaluations aid greatly in the planning process. A community profile by each library in NOLA would very likely lead toward a greater consensus on barriers to older adult service, a first step in coordinated action planning.

I. BUDGET COMMITMENTS

The ALA guidelines strongly recommend specification of library budget funds for older adult resources, programs and services, also to be used for assigned staff and their development and interagency cooperative efforts. Not to be forgotten are

those short-term projects for older adults which might be eligible for grant support or might call on outside sources of funding.

Funds are budgeted specifically for older adult services or programs in 13% (4) libraries, all of them at less than 5% of the budget, with one library not checking off the percentage. Without the commitment of specific funding, what kind of facilitated library use is possible?

J. COMPARISON STUDIES

An analysis of older adult services and programs (Table 10) shows the most active library to have a total of forty-four, and the least active two libraries to have six offerings each for older adults.

When each library's ranking is compared to the population served (Table 11), no positive relationship is evidenced, nor when each ranking is compared to library income (Table 12). Analyses of circulation (Table 13), volumes per capita (Table 14), income per capita (Table 15), and FTE staff (Table 16), all in comparison to service/program rankings, reveal none of these factors are associated with a higher level of service.

TABLE 10

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM ANALYSIS OF OLDER ADULT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Questions																			Total
A	B	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	M	N	P	R	S	T	X	Y	Z	
4	14	5	1	0	2	2	4	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	8	0	1	0	44
4	7	6	1	0	1	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	4	0	1	0	31
3	4	5	1	0	3	0	5	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	27
2	7	7	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	25
3	3	6	0	0	3	0	3	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	25
2	2	5	1	0	2	1	1	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	22
2	1	6	1	1	3	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	22
1	1	6	1	0	3	1	1	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	20
4	0	3	1	0	0	0	3	1	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	19
1	4	4	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	19
2	0	4	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	1	0	18
1	4	3	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	17
3	0	6	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	17
2	0	4	1	0	1	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	16
1	0	5	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	16
2	1	4	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	15
2	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	14
2	1	3	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	14
1	0	3	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	13
1	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	13
1	2	4	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	13
0	0	4	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	11
3	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	11
2	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	10
1	0	4	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
1	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	9
1	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	9
1	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	7
0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	6
0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6

TABLE 11

COMPARISON OF POPULATION SERVED TO OLDER ADULT SERVICES

Population Served	No. of Services	Ranking in Services
276,600	14	18th
241,646	44	1st
81,422	27	3rd
63,000	15	16th
58,000	18	11th
52,422	13	21st
50,000	9	26th
47,475	19	9th
42,000	11	23rd
35,000	25	4th
25,026	13	20th
21,000	22	7th
18,800	16	15th
18,200	16	14th
16,520	13	19th
14,299	6	30th
11,610	17	13th
10,000	14	17th
10,000	19	10th
9,546	9	27th
7,262	10	24th
7,216	22	6th
7,100	20	8th
5,700	6	29th
3,351	17	12th
3,151	11	22nd
2,500	7	28th
2,424	31	2nd
2,256	10	25th
2,162	25	5th

TABLE 12

COMPARISON OF 1988 INCOME TO OLDER ADULT SERVICES

Income	No. of Services	Ranking in Services
$5,733,645	14	18th
$1,603,844	44	1st
$1,056,657	27	3rd
$814,439	13	21st
$725,984	15	16th
$648,245	11	23rd
$519,977	13	20th
$491,557	17	13th
$468,749	19	10th
$434,985	25	4th
$430,910	16	15th
$415,929	13	19th
$378,239	20	8th
$332,348	16	14th
$316,423	9	27th
$316,061	22	6th
$306,022	18	11th
$245,000	9	26th
$242,000	11	22nd
$196,500	19	9th
$192,351	25	5th
$183,684	6	30th
$174,948	10	24th
$173,000	14	17th
$153,686	17	12th
$152,712	6	29th
$140,755	22	7th
$100,693	31	2nd
$66,096	7	28th
$62,537	10	25th

TABLE 13

COMPARISON OF CIRCULATION TO OLDER ADULT SERVICES

Circulation	No. of Services	Ranking in Services
1,509,121	14	18th
479,044	13	21st
472,158	44	1st
428,111	11	23rd
390,637	27	3rd
241,931	15	16th
239,135	22	6th
216,691	16	15th
209,559	16	14th
173,858	18	11th
171,372	22	7th
165,106	17	13th
162,923	13	19th
147,394	20	8th
147,180	9	27th
120,390	25	5th
119,030	14	17th
117,741	13	20th
116,629	9	26th
99,811	10	24th
98,616	25	4th
95,428	19	10th
83,433	31	2nd
70,217	19	9th
61,000	11	22nd
55,274	6	29th
50,670	17	12th
49,034	6	30th
33,489	10	25th
28,190	7	28th

TABLE 14

COMPARISON OF VOLUMES PER CAPITA TO OLDER ADULT SERVICES

Volumes per Capita	No. of Services	Ranking in Services
15.001	31	2nd
12.868	25	5th
12.516	17	12th
9.044	11	22nd
8.895	20	8th
7.666	22	6th
6.683	10	25th
6.310	6	29th
6.036	7	28th
5.974	17	13th
4.922	10	24th
3.842	9	27th
3.652	16	14th
3.159	14	17th
3.095	16	15th
3.047	22	7th
2.926	19	10th
2.833	9	26th
2.572	13	19th
2.511	6	30th
2.337	13	21st
2.331	13	20th
2.314	14	18th
2.142	25	4th
1.920	15	16th
1.885	11	23rd
1.347	27	3rd
.867	19	9th
.673	44	1st
.119	18	11th

TABLE 15

COMPARISON OF INCOME PER CAPITA TO OLDER ADULT SERVICES

Income per Capita	No. of Services	Ranking in Services
88.97	25	5th
74.68	11	22nd
60.50	31	2nd
53.27	20	8th
49.46	17	12th
46.87	19	10th
42.34	17	13th
38.29	22	6th
34.80	10	25th
29.15	7	28th
26.70	6	29th
25.18	13	19th
24.17	9	27th
24.09	10	24th
22.92	16	15th
20.77	13	20th
20.73	14	18th
19.17	14	17th
18.26	16	14th
15.54	13	21st
15.43	11	23rd
13.69	6	30th
12.98	27	3rd
12.42	25	4th
11.52	15	16th
11.50	22	7th
8.66	9	26th
6.64	44	1st
5.24	18	11th
4.10	19	9th

TABLE 16

COMPARISON OF FTE STAFF TO OLDER ADULT SERVICES

FTE Staff	No. of Services	Ranking in Services
145.0	14	18th
48.8	44	1st
43.4	27	3rd
28.4	13	21st
22.7	15	16th
19.5	11	23rd
18.5	17	13th
13.7	13	19th
13.1	13	20th
11.3	20	8th
11.3	25	4th
11.3	16	15th
10.3	16	14th
9.7	22	7th
9.6	9	26th
9.0	19	10th
8.6	18	11th
8.1	22	6th
7.0	10	24th
6.9	19	9th
6.8	9	27th
6.3	11	22nd
5.5	6	30th
5.3	17	12th
5.2	31	2nd
5.0	14	17th
4.2	25	5th
4.1	6	29th
2.4	10	25th
1.9	7	28th

V. DISCUSSION

A. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Action by the surveyed libraries to increase understanding of the dynamics of aging has been negligible. An up-to-date study is needed to clarify administrators' and librarians' attitudes toward the older population as an essential step in laying the foundation for effective service.

In ranking obstacles to older adult service, the disparity of viewpoints among the libraries was great. This lack of unity would argue against any successful group effort directed against the barriers. Without consensus, each library independently addresses or ignores the complexities of older adult service. Is each library so unique in what it faces, or is the question so subjective that a common ground is not possible? A Delphi study of barriers to service might more sharply define and prioritize the problems.

Compared to Turock's research, this survey uncovered improvements in libraries' hiring of older adults. A more in-depth study could uncover the actual numbers of older staff in each library in comparison to all staff and the numbers of volunteers in each library, to determine what progress has been made on both fronts. In such a study, clarification between those older employees who have not as yet retired as distinct from those hired after 65 would be required.

B. SUMMARY

The ALA guidelines underscore the need for a proactive response to the needs of older adults undergoing transitions

through common and predictable life stages. There are so many suggestions in the ALA guidelines that, being effected, would make older adult service an outstanding contribution to the community. These challenges do not necessarily rest upon a grand strategy but can be incorporated gradually, one additional service or program at a time. Based on the fact that older adult services are not being terminated in the surveyed libraries, the enthusiastic response of seniors would generate momentum toward more effort.

A trend of increasing services to older adults can be seen in the areas of collection and format diversity. Publicity is used by three-quarters of the libraries, as is some sort of outreach effort. Modified physical features are evidenced in nearly three-quarters of the libraries. Volunteers have proven to be a valuable resource for the public library. All these strengths in current service to the older population exhibit a growing responsiveness to their needs.

On the other hand, less than half the libraries show any activity in the area of information and referral for older adults, and the same percentage has no active programming for them. Interagency cooperation is scant, and cultural, economic, and ethnic differences among older adults are not considered to any extent. The fact that staff assigned to work with and for older adults is just about non-existent surely is a critical factor in the neglect of these aspects of service.

Especially critical is the need for transportation to the library site or delivery of materials and services to the older adults hampered by lack of mobility. In an interview-based study

of 4,651 people by the Department of Health and Human Services on the functional limitations of noninstitutionalized older individuals, among those aged 65 to 69, it was discovered that 12% have difficulty in walking; for those aged 85 and over, 40% have difficulty.[52] "At all ages, walking was the most difficult"[53] of the seven personal care activities studied.

It is recognized that bookmobiles bring the library to people having transportation difficulties. Libraries would do well to aid older adults by informing them about public transportation or alternatives that the community may offer such as dial-a-ride or van services or even volunteer drivers. The dynamics between the aging and the public library will eventually affect everyone; preparation should begin now.

Turock believes public libraries "have a long way to go before they become a significant part of the growing national trend to recognize and encourage the potential of older adults."[54] She states there is

> . . .still a need for older adult services to be recognized as a distinct program entity. This would encourage assessment of the needs of older adults, the establishing of objectives to meet those needs, the development and implementation of programs and the evaluation of results."[55]

The expectation is that this research will initiate discussion but, more importantly, action on behalf of older adults. Developing services in context is crucial so that the public library may aid in the gaining of the skills necessary in coping with the developmental challenges of later life.

Notes

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[6]Ibid., 60.

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[10]Ibid., 91-2.

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[12]Margaret E. Monroe, "Growth of Library Services to Older Adults in Wisconsin: A Segment of History," Wisconsin Library Bulletin 79 (Winter 1984): 128.

[13]Betty J. Turock, "Public Library Service for Older Adults: Update 1984," Library Quarterly 57 (April 1987): 140.

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[15]Ibid., 574. [16]Ibid., 384. [17]Ibid., 289.

[18]George L. Maddox, ed., The Encyclopedia of Aging (New York: Springer, 1987), 22.

[19]Harrod, 770.

[20]Phyllis I. Dalton, Library Service to the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (Phoenix, Az.: Oryx, 1985), 360.

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[22]Monroe, 29-30.

[23]Genevieve M. Casey, Library Services for the Aging (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1984), 53-4.

[24]Ibid., 54.

[25]Diane G. Thompson, "Serving Older Adults in North Carolina Public Libraries: A Survey," North Carolina Libraries 46 (Fall 1988): 171.

[26]Ibid., 177.

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[31]Turock, "Public Library Service," 166. [32]Ibid., 164.

[33]Ibid., 165-6.

[34]Betty J. Turock, ed., Information and Aging (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1988), 10.

[35]Elliott E. Kanner, "The Impact of Gerontological Concepts on Principles of Librarianship" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1972), 108.

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[38]Turock, "Public Library Service," 158.

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[45]Ibid., 149. [46]Ibid., 159.

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APPENDIX A

Guidelines for Library Service to Older Adults

Guidelines for Library Service to Older Adults

Prepared by the Library Services to an Aging Population Committee, Reference and Adult Services Division, American Library Association. Adopted by the Reference and Adult Services Division Board of Directors, January 1987. (Supersedes "Guidelines for Library Services to an Aging Population," July 1975)

INTRODUCTION

The importance of library services to meet the particular needs of older adults increases along with this group's numbers. These guidelines suggest means whereby librarians can meet those needs.

1. Exhibit and promote a positive attitude toward the aging process and older adults.

1.1 Actively seek to improve communication skills with people of all ages.

1.2 Educate its administrators, librarians, and library staff regarding physiological, psychological, social, and cultural development of people throughout the lifespan.

1.3 Participate in continuing education which will enhance skills in working with older adults.

1.4 Avoid labeling and look beyond the stereotypes and mythologies of aging.

1.5 Exhibit the same level of interest, comfort, and respect with older adults as with any other patrons.

2. Promote information and resources on aging and its implications not only to older adults themselves but also to family members, professionals in the field of aging, and other persons interested in the aging process.

2.1 Assess the information needs of the older population in order to build a collection which meets the real needs of:
- a. people interested in understanding the aging process;
- b. people planning for a change in lifestyle or employment;
- c. individuals who act as advocates for the aging;
- d. service providers; and
- e. younger people learning about the potential for growth over the lifespan.

2.2 Assure that library selection and weeding policies lead to the acquisition of current and useful materials which reflect diverse formats and information needs. Collection development should include information on:
- a. lifelong learning;
- b. older adults as consumers of aging services;
- c. behavioral implications;
- d. cultural, ethnic, economic, and regional differences;
- e. leisure time activities; and
- f. issues raised by the rapid aging of our society

2.3 Locate sources of appropriate materials including large print books, pamphlets, and audiovisual materials (e.g., talking books, tapes, films, videotapes, etc.) which are available for purchase, for loan, or at no cost.

2.4 Survey the existing gerontological resources within the community and make available the materials or information about them.

2.5 Organize information on community agencies, activities, and resources for use by older adults and those who work with them.

2.6 Provide ready access to an information and referral service which includes current information on:
- a. human services agencies serving older adults;
- b. speakers, reviewers, and other resource people available for programming; and
- c. publications, reports, community population profiles, funding agencies, and other research sources.

2.7 Publicize the availability of resources by:
- a. providing reading lists, advertisements, and exhibits of interest to the publics identified above;
- b. introducing the materials, demonstrating their use or co-sponsoring with other agencies and organizations, discussion series and programs at the library or in the community;

c. mailing informative brochures to club presidents, committee chairpersons, interested individuals, and concerned agencies and organizations; and
d. attending meetings, giving presentations, and working actively towards community involvement.

3. Assure services for older adults which reflect cultural, ethnic and economic differences.

3.1 Become knowledgeable about the cultural, ethnic, and economic composition of the community.
3.2 Use this information to purchase materials and arrange service, to train staff, to conduct programs, and to develop and maintain interagency cooperation.
3.3 Actively participate with existing agencies to serve the literacy needs of the older population.

4. Provide library service appropriate to the special needs of all older adults, including the minority who are geographically isolated, homebound, institutionalized, or disabled.

4.1 Provide trained staff to serve older adults.
4.2 Provide special materials such as talking books or large print books and periodicals.
4.3 Provide special equipment such as tape recorders, magnifying devices, page turners, reading machines, etc., to help in the reading process.
4.4 Identify the homebound or institutionalized who are in need of library service.
4.5 Provide personalized library service to meet the special needs of the individual within the institution (i.e., bed-to-bed, etc.) or the home.
4.6 Cooperate with the institutional administration in the planning and implementation of library services for the institutionalized.
4.7 Provide on-site service to the homebound and institutionalized, with training and transportation provided by the library.

5. Utilize the potential of older adults (paid or volunteer) as liaisons to reach their peers and as a resource in intergenerational programming.

5.1 Develop and implement well-organized training sessions for the individuals carrying out the library program.
5.2 Invite staff (including volunteers) to participate in library staff meetings so that they can be kept current about resources and policies.
5.3 Work closely with staff to solicit ideas, ensure a meaningful work experience, and provide as much autonomy as is desirable.

6. Employ older adults at both professional and support levels for either general library work or for programs specifically targeted to older adults.

6.1 Make certain that older adults are given serious consideration as candidates for either professional or support staff positions as available.
6.2 Request volunteer help only when funding is not available for paid positions.

7. Involve older adults in the planning and design of library services and programs for the entire community and for older adults in particular.

7.1 Identify representative older adults in the community to participate in library planning.
7.2 Assure that adequate needs assessment is conducted to represent the needs and interests of the older adults of the community.
7.3 Actively plan and implement programming to meet the needs identified.

8. Promote and develop working relationships with other agencies and groups connected with the needs of older adults.

8.1 Identify agencies, organizations, and groups in the community which are interested in older adults. Confer with agency leadership about ways in which the library can contribute to the achievement of their goals and objectives through:
a. providing resources, materials, and services for older adults and for professional and lay workers in the field;
b. cooperating in programming, service delivery, and in-service training; and
c. involving key persons in cooperative library and interagency planning.
8.2 Identify organizations of older adults in the community and involve them in the planning and delivery of services.
8.3 Enlist participation of area librarians in developing cooperative collection development, and in developing services, programs, continuing education and staff training to improve library service to older adults.
8.4 Work toward comprehensive cooperative planning for older adults by:
a. working with educational institutions to promote lifelong learning opportunities for older adults;
b. locating and working with preretirement groups sponsored by business, industry, and other agencies;

c. coordinating with other agencies to eliminate unnecessary duplication of services;
d. making available a list of community resources for information and referral which would then be available to older adults and the agencies which serve them; and
e. asking that professional staff and administration keep abreast of current developments in gerontology and geriatrics regionally and nationally so that informed interagency communication can be facilitated.

9. Provide programs, services, and information for those preparing for retirement or later-life career alternatives.

9.1 Develop a collection of materials and information on pre-retirement planning, retirement, and career alternatives, and provide bibliographies on these topics.
9.2 Cooperate with other community agencies to provide workshops, programs, and seminars on such topics as pre-retirement planning, retirement, and career alternatives.
9.3 Serve as a clearinghouse for information on retirement, alternate employment, and other career opportunities.

10. Facilitate library use by older persons through improved library design and access to transportation.

10.1 Make sure that both the collection and meeting rooms are physically accessible to older adults, with special regard for the impaired elderly, by providing as necessary ramps, hand bars, and other design features.
10.2 Provide or be knowledgeable about the availability of assistive devices such as audio loops, infrared listening systems, etc.
10.3 Provide furniture for use with wheelchairs.
10.4 Strategically locate large-print signage, including informational and safety guides.
10.5 Inform or assist older adults in securing transportation by utilizing public or volunteer transportation, new or existing van services, or dial-a-ride systems.
10.6 Seek and secure funding for any of the above.

11. Incorporate as part of the library's planning and evaluation process the changing needs of an aging population.

11.1 Conduct periodic needs assessments to determine whether library resources and programs are satisfying the changing needs of older adults.
11.2 Use the results of the needs assessments and continuing evaluation of current programs and services to assist with planning.

12. Aggressively seek sources of funding, and commit a portion of the library budget to programs and services for older adults.

12.1 Use these funds to acquire resources, assign or recruit staff, promote services, conduct staff development, and forge inter-agency cooperation.
12.2 Pursue sources of additional funds in order to provide for special or one-time-only projects. ■■

APPENDIX B

Survey Questionnaire

Kent State University

SURVEY OF OLDER ADULT SERVICES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Name of library _____ Address _____

Name and Title of person reporting _____

Instructions: Please check all that apply.

A. Does your library regularly provide outreach services to older adults such as

1. ___ Home delivery service
2. ___ Books by mail
3. ___ Bookmobile service
4. ___ Off site programming
5. ___ Transportation for older adults to the library
6. ___ Deposit collections in nursing homes or senior centers
7. ___ Other:_____

B. Does your library offer regularly scheduled programs that older adults participate in, on topics such as

1. ___ Book reviews or discussions
2. ___ Crafts or hobbies
3. ___ Consumer education
4. ___ Current events
5. ___ Poetry and creative writing
6. ___ Library skills
7. ___ Work and retirement planning
8. ___ Aging process (gerontology)
9. ___ Financial or income tax assistance
10. ___ GED or literacy programming
11. ___ Intergenerational programs (e.g. those involving older adults and children)
12. ___ Drama
13. ___ Games
14. ___ Travelogues
15. ___ Health
16. ___ Nutrition
17. ___ Music
18. ___ Oral history
19. ___ Other:_____

C. Within the last five years has your library added books or materials that relate to the older adult or address their needs about

1. ___ Health issues
2. ___ Financial affairs
3. ___ Lifelong learning
4. ___ Leisure time activities
5. ___ Loss of a spouse
6. ___ Tax planning and information
7. ___ Changing family relationships
8. ___ Adjustment to retirement/job change
9. ___ Positive fictionalized approaches to aging
10. ___ Consumer issues
11. ___ Nutrition
12. ___ Sexuality
13. ___ Travel
14. ___ Elder-Hostel
15. ___ Housing

D. Does your collection include

1. ___ Large print books
2. ___ Large print serials
3. ___ Books on tape
4. ___ Special telecommunication devices for the deaf
5. ___ Braille material
6. ___ Talking books
7. ___ Video tapes

E. Are materials available in your collection to assist older adults, professional service providers (social workers, nurses, etc.), family members and other patrons in understanding the aging process? ___ Yes ___ No

F. Does your library provide services to older adults in ethnic groups such as

1. ___ Large print items in a foreign language
2. ___ Translators/interpreters (e.g. bilingual staff members)
3. ___ Other:_____

G. For the older adult does your library maintain files on

1. ___ Community agencies (e.g. phone numbers, addresses, types of services, materials offered)
2. ___ Community activities (speakers, events)
3. ___ Funding agencies for older adult programming and materials services
4. ___ Other:_____

H. Does your library provide career and employment information for older adults such as

1. ___ Job listings
2. ___ Advisory service
3. ___ Other:_____

I. Do you publicize your programs and resources for older adults through

1. ___ Reading lists or exhibits
2. ___ Radio
3. ___ T.V.
4. ___ Presentations to local groups in the community
5. ___ Newspapers
6. ___ Direct mailing
7. ___ Other:_____

J. Have you discontinued any programs or services for older adults in the last five years?

___ Yes ___ No

If yes, why?

1. ___ Lack of funds
2. ___ Insufficient attendance
3. ___ Lack of staff interest
4. ___ Lack of staff
5. ___ Other:_____

K. Does your library survey older adults in the community for their preferences in programming or services?

___ Yes ___ No If yes, how often:_____

L. Do older adults participate in planning their own services (e.g. serve on advisory committees)?

___ Yes No ___

M. Which features does your library provide?

1. ___ Accessibility to the disabled (automatic doors, ramp, elevators, restroom facilities, etc.)
2. ___ Meeting rooms with high intensity lighting
3. ___ Magnifying glasses
4. ___ TTY for the hearing impaired
5. ___ Large print signage
6. ___ Computerized catalog accessible by home personal computer
7. ___ Bookholders
8. ___ Stereophonic systems for personal listening
9. ___ Transportation for older adults
10. ___ Other:_____

N. Does your library provide staff workshops or seminars to enhance skills in working with older adults?

___ Yes ___ No

O. Do staff members participate in non-library-sponsored continuing education to enhance skills in working with older adults?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Not sure

P. Does your library provide workshops or seminars to educate staff on life stage development and the aging process?

___ Yes ___ No

Q. Do staff members participate in non-library-sponsored continuing education on life stage development and the aging process?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Not sure

R. Does your library employ any staff member(s) whose <u>primary</u> responsibility is working directly with older adults?

___ Yes __ No

If yes, title/position of staff member(s) _____

S. Are funds budgeted specifically for older adult services or programs?

___ Yes ___ No

If yes, approximately what percent of the annual budget?

1. ___ Less than 5%
2. ___ 5 to 10%
3. ___ 11 to 15%
4. ___ 16 to 20%
5. ___ 21 to 25%
6. ___ 26 to 30%
7. ___ Over 30%

T. Is your library involved in cooperative planning with community agencies, organizations, or groups connected with the needs of older adults (i.e., service delivery, in-service training, etc.)?
___ Yes ___ No

If yes, what types of community groups are targeted for interagency cooperation?

1. ___ Educational institutions
2. ___ Retirement groups
3. ___ Local govt. agencies
4. ___ Retirement apartments
5. ___ Employment agencies
6. ___ Local historical society
7. ___ Political/civic groups
8. ___ Religious/church groups
9. ___ Local nonprofit agencies-charities, foundations, etc.
10. ___ Prof. service provider groups-social workers,nurses, etc.
11. ___ Senior centers
12. ___ Hospitals
13. ___ Nursing homes
14. ___ Local businesses
15. ___ Elder-Hostel groups
16. ___ Volunteer groups
17. ___ Social groups
18. ___ Other:_____

U. Please rank the following possible barriers to older adult services in order of magnitude: 1 = most significant, 6 = least significant.

1. ___ Lack of funds
2. ___ Lack of staff
3. ___ Lack of staff interest
4. ___ Lack of interest by seniors
5. ___ Lack of transportation by seniors
6. ___ Other:_____

V. It is important for librarians to know about the aging process in order to better serve older adults. (Circle one:)
1 2 3 4 5
Strongly agree - Agree - Not sure - Disagree - Strongly disagree

W. It is important for librarians to know about the concept of ageism (stereotypes and discrimination against the aging) to better serve older adults. (Circle one:)
1 2 3 4 5
Strongly agree - Agree - Not sure - Disagree - Strongly disagree

X. In the last five years, has your library hired any person(s) over age 64 ___ Yes ___ No ___ Not sure

If yes, in what position(s) _____

Y. Do older adults do volunteer work for your library?
___ Yes ___ No

If yes, in what capacity _____

Z. Does your library track how many of its patrons are over age 64?
___ Yes ___ No If yes, how many are over 64? _____

AA. Comments: _____

APPENDIX C

Cover Letter

School of Library Science
(216) 672-2782

Kent STATE UNIVERSITY
Kent Ohio 44242-0001

April 12, 1990

Dear Library Director:

Please find enclosed a questionnaire pertaining to public library services to older adults. For the purpose of this study, older adults are defined as persons sixty-five years of age and older. This portion of the national population is increasing and the purpose of my investigation is to analyze the level of public library service currently offered to this age group within a limited area. The American Library Association's "Guidelines for Library Service to Older Adults" (1987) form the base upon which survey questions have been developed. I am collecting data from all Northeastern Ohio Library Association affiliated public libraries, which will yield a base of information from seven northeastern Ohio counties.

This study is being conducted under the auspices of the School of Library Science, Kent State University. It is expected that this research will bring new insights into solving relevant service-oriented problems.

Please be candid in your responses and be assured of the utmost confidentiality of all information provided. Your participation is voluntary and you may request to withdraw from the study at any time. If you prefer, you may have a staff member fill out the questionnaire if you think he or she is so qualified. Please return the completed questionnaire by May 3, 1990. An addressed stamped envelope is included for your convenience.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Sincerely,

Darlene Fegen
1087 Webb Rd.
Lakewood, Ohio
44107

Selected Bibliography

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